

Message Text

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61/46

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

----- 025267

R 301330Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4760

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 1448

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- TEXT --

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, CB

SUBJECT: MEN FOR FANK: A STATUS REPORT

1. SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH THE GKR IS MOVING AHEAD WITH PREPARATIONS FOR A CENSUS TO FORM THE BASIS OF A NEW CONSCRIPTION EFFORT, FEW IF ANY STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO PULL IN DESERTERS AND DRAFT DODGERS AND TO CARRY THE NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION/RECRUITMENT PROGRAM TO THE PROVINCES. LACK OF PROGRESS SEEMS PARTLY DUE TO THE RECENT ILLNESS OF DEFENSE MINISTER THAPPANH NGINN AND TO THE INEXPERIENCE OF NEW CHIEF OF JOINT CONSCRIPTION STAFF BUT PRINCIPALLY TO A GENERAL UNWILLINGNESS TO TAKE ON THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE MOVES. IN A JANUARY 28 MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND OTHER KEY POLICY MAKERS, WE OBTAINED AGREEMENT ON A GENERAL TIME-TABLE FOR NEW MEASURES, WHICH MAY WELL NOT BE MET BUT WHICH WE HOPE WILL NEVERTHELESS ACCELERATE ACTION. WE ALSO TOOK OCCASION TO PRESS FOR ABSORPTION OF AT LEAST PART OF THE REPUBLICAN POLICE FORCE WITHIN FANK AND FOR CLOSER ADHERENCE TO AGREED PRIORITIES IN ASSIGNMENT OF RECRUITS TO COMBAT UNITS. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF THE JOINT CONSCRIPTION STAFF, WHOSE ENLARGED RESPONSIBILITIES AND GENERAL COMPOSITION
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WAS CONFIRMED BY GOVERNMENTAL DECREE ON JAN 25 PHNOM PENH 1369), BG YONG YOC HANG HAS BEEN PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH ORGANIZING HIS OFFICE, PREPARING FOR THE NEW CENSUS, AND CONSULTING WITH CONCERNED OFFICIALS (INCLUDING MEETINGS WITH ALL CITY AND

GENERAL MOBILIZATION OFFICIALS ON THE CENSUS AND WITH PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS ON CONSCRIPTION IN THE PROVINCES). PREVIOUSLY AGREED STEPS TO ROUNDUP DESERTERS, TO SEEK OUT DRAFT DODGERS AND TO BEGIN SYSTEMATIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL RECRUITMENT/ CONSCRIPTION IN THE PROVINCES WERE POSTPONED ON THE GROUNDS THAT THAPPANA NGINN WAS TOO SICK TO MAKE DECISIONS (HE WAS INDEED BEDRIDDEN WITH HIGH FEVER), THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION WAS TOO TENSE TO PERMIT STRONG ARM TACTICS AND THAT VERNORS HAD UNANIMOUSLY OBJECTED TO FURNISHING MEN FOR PHNOM PENH'S NEEDS. CHARGE, CHMEDTC AND POLMIL COUNSELOR SUBSEQUENTLY ASKED TO MEAR WITH PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET, THAPPANA NGINN, INTERIOR MINISTER CHHANN SOKHUM, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL BG KIM ANN DORE, HONG QCOC HANG, NATIONAL GENDARMERIE COMMANDER COLONEL HEM SAVETH AND THEIJGAIDES TO REVIEW PROGRESS AND SET NEW GOALS. FOLLOWING IS OUTCOME OF THAT JANUARY 29 MEETING:

3. CENSUS. BECAUSE OF THE PRESENT CONFRONTATION OF TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT, A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO USE 1,600 MEMBERS OF THE NEWLY FORMED REPUBLICAN POLICE INSTEAD OF TEACHERS AS CE TUS TAKERS. THESE POLICEMENT BEGAN A SHORT COURSE OF INSTRUCTION ON JANUARY 28 AND YONG YOC HANG HAS ALSO SCHEDULED MEETINGS THIS WEEK OF GENERAL MOBILIZATION OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN THE CENSUS. CENCUS WILL BEGIN ON FEBRUARY 4 (OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER RECEIPT OF FORMS NOW BEING PRINTED BY 7TH PSOPS) AND IS SCHEDULED TO BE COMPLETED AND TALLIED WITHIN TWO WEEKS. TO COVER PERSONAL EXPENSES AND AS AN INCENTIVE, CENSUS TAKERS WILL RECEIVED 200 RIELS PER DAY AND EXTRA ALLOWANCE AND CHIEFS OF THE SOME 16,500 TEN-HOUSE UNITS 200 RIELS FOR THE ENTIRE PERIOD. TO HELP ENERGIZE THE GENERALSIOBILIZATION STRUCTURE, A GOVERNMENTAL DECREE IS SOON TO BE ISSUED GRANTING CERTAIN

HONORARY, BUT NOT MONETARY, REWARDS TO THESE UNPAID OFFICIALS. A CAMPAIGN TO ETPLAIN THE CENSUS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS TO OPEN ON FEBRUARY 8. COMMENT: THE PRINCIPAL WEAKNESS OF OCENSUS PLANS IS PARTIAL RELIANCE ON GENERAL MOBILIZATION OFFICIALS, WHICH UNFORTUNATELY STEMS FROM AN UNSHAKEABLE CONVICTION ON THE PART OF THE MARSHAL AND HIS JINCIPAL AIDES THAT THIS SORT OF LOCAL

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PARTICIPATION IS ESSENTIAL TO OBTAIN PUBLIC CO-OPERATION. A MORE EASILY RESOLVED PROBLEM HAS ARISEN WITHIN THE REPUBLICAN POLICE, WHO CLAIM THEY HAD NOT RECEIVED SALARIES SINCE RECRUITMENT AND ARE NOW DEMANDING PAY BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN THE CENSUS.

4. DESERTS AND DRAFT DODGERS. BEFORE THE JANUARY 28 MEETING, THAPPANH NGINN HAD APPARENTLY SCRAPPED PLANS TO START PICKING UP DRAFT EVADERS ON GROUNDS THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION WAS TOO TENSE FOR SUCH AN OPERATION AND PLANNED TO LIMIT ROUND-UP OF DESERTERS TO NATIONAL GENDARMERIE CHECKS AT CINEMAS AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES. AT THE END OF THE MEETING, HOWEVER, HE AGREED THAT MIXED TEAMS OF GENDARMERIE, NATIONAL POLICE, GENERAL MOBILIZATION

AND PHNOM PENH GARRISON PERSONNEL

WOULD SEEK OUT BOTH DESERTERS
AND DRAFT DODGERS IN
EACH SANGKAT. A MEETING OF THE LEADERS
OF THESE AGENCIES IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 1, TEAMS ARE TO
BE FORMED ON FEBRUARY 2 AND OPERATIONS ARE TO BEGIN ON FEBRUARY
5. COMMENT. WE EXPECT THAT ALL INVOLVED WILL SEEK ANY EXCUSE
AVAILABLE TO DELAY FURTHER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ESSENTIAL
BUT PAINFUL ELEMENT OF THE CONSCRIPTION PROGRAM. WE WILL CON-
SEQUENTLY MONITOR PROGRESS CLOSELY.

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W
----- 002794

R 301330Z JAN 74
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4761
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
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5. CONSCRIPTION IN THE PROVINCES. CABINET MINISTERS HAD AP-
ARENTLY ACQUIESCED TACITLY TO A UNANIMOUS APPEAL BY THE GOVERNORS
TO RETAIN ALL CONSCRIPTS/RECRUITS IN THEIR PROVINCES FOR THE
FIRST YEAR OF THEIR TOUR OF DUTY. WHEN THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH
A POLICY WERE EXPLAINED TO HIM, HOWEVER, LONG BORET DIRECTED
THAT A CIRCULAR BE DRAFTED INSTRUCTING PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES
TO DRAFT AND RECRUIT MEN FOR THE GENERAL RESERVE WITH ACTUAL
ASSIGNMENT TO BE LEFT TO THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR
PERSONNEL. WE NOTED THAT SOME PROVINCES HAVE FAILED TO PROVIDE
CADRE FOR THEIR NEW REACTION UNITS WHICH ARE TO RECEIVE RECRUITS.
COMMENT: SPECIFIC ORDERS FROM THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ARE, OF
COURSE, ONLY THE FIRST STEP IN WHAT IS SURE TO BE A HARD STRUGGLE
TO GET THE PROVINCES TO IMPLEMENT CORRECTLY THE CENTRAL CON-
SCRIPTION AND RECRUITMENT PROGRAM.

6. APPORTIONING OF NEW RECRUITS AMONG FANK UNITS. BG KIM AN
DORE NOTED THAT THE PRACTICE OF UNIT RECRUITING INTERFERED WITH
THE PROPER UTILIZATION OF RECRUITS NOW LEAVING THE TRAINING
CENTERS. HE CLAIMED, IN FACT, THAT ABOUT FOUR-FIFTHS OF THESE
RECRUITS ARE ALREADY TABBED TO GO TO SPECIFIC UNITS, MANY
OF WHICH DO NOT HAVE A PRIORITY. THE MEETING AGREED THAT INDIV-
IDUAL RECRUITMENT BY UNITS NOT FIGURING ON THE AGREED PRIORITY

LIST SHOULD END. COMMENT. WE HAD, OF COURSE, ANTICIPATED THIS PROBLEM WHEN THE CITY RESORTED TO UNIT RECRUITMENT IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE ACCESSIONS. THE BIGGEST OFFENDER HAS BEEN PHNOM PENH SUBDIVISION COMMANDER BG CHHIMM CHHOUM, A PROTEGE OF THE SECRET

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MARSHAL. WE HAVE PROPOSED THAT THE DEVELOPING IMBALANCE BE ADJUSTED BY DISSOLVING EXISTING PHNOM PENH UNITS AND ASSIGNING THEIR PERSONNEL TO GENERAL RESERVE UNITS.

7. THE REPUBLICAN POLICE. PRIOR TO JANUARY 29 MEETING WE LEARNED FROM THE MINISTER OF FINANCE THAT CABINET HAD AGREED TO CONTINUE THE REPUBLICAN POLICE AS A SEPARATE ENTITY UNDER THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR DESPITE EARLIER ASSURANCES TO US THAT IT WOULD BE PLACED UNDER THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WHILE ITS PERSONNEL WERE GRADUALLY ABSORBED INTO THE NATIONAL GENDARMERIE. DESPITE OUR AND THAPPANA NGINN'S ARGUMENT THAT THE GKR COULD NOT AFFORD THE LUXURY OF A THIRD POLICE FORCE WHEN ITS ARMY LACKS MEN, THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR REFUSED TO AGREE TO THE FORCE'S DISSOLUTION. A COMPROMISE WAS FINALLY REACHED UNDER WHICH THE REPUBLICAN POLICE WILL BE REDUCED FROM 5,000 TO 2,000 MEN WITH THE REMAINDER TO BE APPORTIONED BETWEEN THE NATIONAL GENDARMERIE AND THE NATIONAL POLICE. COMMENT: WE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT CURRENT STRENGTH OF THE REPUBLICAN POLICE IS ONLY 3,934. THIS AND PRESENT PAY PROBLEMS SHOULD HELP TO WHITTLE IT DOWN. HERE AS ELSEWHERE, HOWEVER, WE WILL HAVE TO WATCH CLOSELY FOR BACKSLIDING.
ENDERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 27 JUL 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY SCHOOLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974PHNOM01448
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750001-2304, P750001-2308
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740174/abbrzbhq.tel
Line Count: 195
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUL 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <24 DEC 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEN FOR FANK: A STATUS REPORT
TAGS: MILI, PINT, CB
To: STATE INFO BANGKOK
AMEMBASED SAIGON
CINCPAC
COMUSSAG
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005